

A: We don't have elected Parliament today. We elected only very small part of it. We need a really elected Parliament. We need direct elections of the President. We need decentralization. We need a multi-party system and decentralization means decentralization in the party and in the state and just. You cannot annihilate this monopoly but you can at least change this situation when there is a state monopoly for almost everything.

MBG: Oh, we're not going to see the crowd(?).

A. We are trying to get to the place, the spot.

A: [INAUDIBLE COMMENT].

A. It is not. It is just an apartment house.

MBG: This, really?

A Yes, Stalin made it for . .

A: Is that what you foresee, giving land to the peasants.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 2

A: Not exactly giving the land to them, oh, yes, yes, yes. Giving the land to them but not making them the ultimate owners, or at least not a very large \_\_\_\_\_

MBG Meaning that they can't hand it on to their children or can they?

A: Look, there is legislation, just, which is discussed. In this legislation there is an article which says that land should be given to those who work on it, a peasant, or worker, or farmer must be able to give this land to his son or to his children, so they can inherit but only in case they're going to work on it. not for sale.

MBG: They can't go live in Moscow in luxury.

A: Yes, yes. So I think that must be a restriction which will hinder the democratization in agriculture. We need more freedom in agriculture.

DE: Looking back, the big shortcoming of Gorbachev was that he did move toward direct elections and multi-party systems sooner?

A Absolutely, absolutely.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 3

DE: Was this, as you see it, not so much a compromise on his part with the right wing but his own conviction that he was not ready to do that himself, is that your feeling?

A: No, I think that his slowdown was caused by conservative obstructionists, by conservative resistance on every level.

DE: But the thesis of this Z article and of this new commentator is that in fact Gorbachev, himself, did not believe in a mutli-party system or in letting the Republics have independence.

A: It's very difficult to judge from what we know.

DE: It's possible or it might not be the case.

A: Yes, but my understanding is that he is for change but he's a very experienced political leader. He tries to keep balance. And when he sees that balance is in favor of conservatives he stops.

DE: And you think he should have taken more chances.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 4

A: Yes, my impression is that he should have taken more chances.

DE: What do you think he sees the risk, if he were to go faster, simply that he will be thrown out or something worse?

A: This is the first and perhaps one of the most important but I think this is not the most important. The most important thing is that he fears for the worst. He fears that conservatives may take advantage. They may get in charge and then reverse the situation.

DE: Why should he not fear that or why do you feel he should fear it less or should take the chance? That's the big question that I think Americans have.

A: Yes, actually, it is not impossible to measure these threats. There are certain indicators which would show to me that there is no such a big threat from conservatives as someone might fear.

DE: You think he over estimates it?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 5

A: Yes, I think that he and his colleagues who are for change over estimate. They are too cautious I think.

DE: What do you think accounts for the difference in your perception and his? What are you seeing that he doesn't see or vice versa.

A: I think he is blinded by his apparatus. The apparatus gives a kind of information which is necessary for the apparatus to survive. And I think that the apparatus should not survive. I think the Party shouldn't ..

DE: What is this apparatus?

MBG: The bureaucracy.

A: I mean Party bureaucracy, yes, Party bureaucracy which runs the country. So, it's absolutely necessary that the Party stop ruling the country. The country should not be ruled by the Party any more.

DE: But is he really relying on Party people? What about people like the Institute for USA? I think they tend to feel that he has had to be this conservative, that he could not have been more bold and survived.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 6

A: I think they are a part of apparatus.

MBG: Do you really?

A: Yes they are.

MBG: Oh dear.

A: Yes, because - in name they are not. But, in their function, they are. They are just a scientific, analytical part with another name.

MBG: Do you think there is more hope in this new research group under the Soviet Peace Committee with Nikitan?

A: I would not account for just any group, you know. There should be many groups which should be competing for attention and which should be studying, analyzing and trying to influence. So, the situation when there was only one group or only two groups which were allowed, which were given money, which were given support.

MBG: Like Imemo(?).

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 7

A: Yes, like Imemo(?) and Descartes(?). This situation should change. I've nothing against these institutes. I know all these people. They are very good scientists and they can do a very good job.

MBG: The thing is, they serve the existing forms and the existing organization much in the way that the JFK School of Government serves the United States government.

A: Yes, I'd say, at least they were supposed to. I cannot say they served properly. I cannot say.

MBG: They took the role of being part of the problem in a way.

A: Yes, sure, absolutely.

MBG: That's interesting. Isn't it Daniel? My goodness. Shall I shut this off? (referring to music in background). Now, unless you wish to continue this.

A: The state, the socialist state. [BACKGROUND MUSIC OBLITERATES SOUND OF VOICES]. [TAPE CUT].

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 8

DE: The sound of the hour here, it's 3 o'clock. Da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da, etc., etc.. [TAPE CUT]. What is to be learned from the experience of the last 70 years?

A. So I think the biggest lesson of these 70 years is that dictatorship or proletariat without democracy, does not work. So, if socialist, socialism is to constructed by or through dictatorship, it will never be constructed. I think 70 years proved this. This is the greatest lesson. There is no democracy, there is no socialism. Socialism without democracy does not exist, will not succeed. I think this is the greatest lesson of these years.

MBG: And why is that if one has a dictatorship of a proletariat, as Marx put it, why is it that the economic stuff cannot succeed? Why?

A: Dictatorship of proletariat in Lenin's version, different versions of how to govern socialist state. - - Look, the people still going there? Desraeli is on your left. People are still going there.

DE: When you say it doesn't work. That's a vague statement. It could mean a lot of things. What do you mean when you say, it doesn't work?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 9

A: So, what is the aim of socialism? The aim of socialism is to provide best or better living for majority.

MBG: What kind of living? Better in what way?

A: In every way. I means better nutrition, better health care, everything better, better, and better. From the point we start.

MBG: And a McDonalds on every corner.

A: Yeah, soon we'll have McDonalds on every corner.

[CONVERSATION ABOUT THE LONG LINE].

A: You have lot of these pictures in your papers, I'm sure, of lines at McDonalds.

MBG: But they will be taken by other people. Anyway, continue what you were saying.

A: So, if we start socialism today at any place, what would be the goal? The goal would be to make our life better in all respects. So, socialism ...



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 10

MBG: You started with nutrition.

A: Because this is a problem here.

MBG: I'm very interested in what you list as the central things that life should be better.

DE: What Margaret is starting to say, - why doesn't it deliver them, the dictatorship, why doesn't it?

A: What's wrong with the dictatorship?

MBG Right, right, right, okay

A: So, in Lenin's version of dictatorship of proletariat, we turn from NEP, do you remember NEP, New Economic Policy when we had a little bit of capitalism here. Then we turned back to socialist democracy, so to say.

MBG: So to say.

A: Yeah, so to say, because there was no democracy. There was dictatorship, military dictatorship. There were prison camps, collective farms.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 11

DE: You say after NEP?

A: After NEP, yes, after NEP. So it did not work because the fundamentals of the economy were crushed down

MBG: The what?

A: Crushed down, the fundamentals. What are the fundamentals of economy? You cannot have economy, our experience proves now, that you cannot have efficient economy if there is no market. You cannot have efficient economy if you do not have decentralized system of industrial production.

DE: How would you compare to China? For instance Deng Chow Ping does not agree with you. What would you tell Deng Chow Ping, is he right, is he wrong?

A Of course he is wrong, I think. I think he is wrong because even in a country as big as China, market and mixed economy [VERY LOUD RADIO OBLITERATES VOICES]. Market and mixed economy even in the case of China will be the basis of healthy, efficient economy and finally they understood this.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 12

DE: They have a market but no democracy.

A: Of course it is not the same. One can have market and can have no democracy. You know, my idea is that you should have both to have a normal.

MBG: What, in your opinion, is inherent in the dictatorship of the proletariat that prevents an economic

\_\_\_\_\_.

A: This is monopoly of everything. This is dictatorship, military dictatorship try to rule everything from one center, just upon a decree.

MBG: I noticed you used the word military.

DE: Is there any merit to the idea that the Chinese think, probably, that Gorbachev did it wrong, that he should have done like them, introduced markets and more decentralization before introducing political democracy, that he tried to do the glastnost and the political part first. They think that it's better to do the markets first, put \_\_\_\_\_ them down either now or even long ago.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 13

A: So he introduced economic reforms along with the political. He did. But they didn't work because conservatives ...

MBG: You're talking about Gorbachev.

A: Yes.

DE: How about in China where they did work better, I take it, the economic reforms?

MBG: The mixed economy in China.

A: Actually I don't have this proper understanding.

DE: Have you studied China much?

A: No, no, we don't have proper understanding of what was going on in China. We heard something about China but I never judge from papers and from what I hear on the TV because ....

MBG: What is your impression Dan how that has ...

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 14

DE: I don't know. Are you trying to get \_\_\_\_\_ clear or not?

A: No, we found out that it is closed and we know that you cannot walk so now we try to sit, have something to eat and then I'll see you to the opera. If you want to go to the hotel first, we go to the hotel.

DE: I don't have to go to the hotel first.

A: Okay, so we sit with my wife and my friends for a while and then we go to the opera.

MBG: Oh, you mean we cannot see the frogs at the \_\_\_\_\_

A: Perhaps they'll show this on TV.

.

MBG: You think they might tonight, late tonight?

A: Sure they will show it, absolutely.

MBG: Anyway, so continue.

A: So, do you have any, I don't know.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 15

MBG: Oh, you were asking about China.

[TAPE CUT].]

[NEW LOCATION].

[WOMAN SPEAKING IN RUSSIAN].

MBG: Come on tell.

A: She tells him that there are three cards which are 3,  
7, and Ace, 3,7, and Ace.

MBG: Magic, all magic numbers.

A: Yeah, all the magic numbers, yes. But the situation is  
just exciting. But she dies out of excitement. She's so  
...

MBG: During this conversation?

A: After she gives him the secret.

DE: What is the secret?

A: So she knows exactly three cards which give the ...

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 16

WOMAN: 3, 7, and Ace.

DE: But what does that mean, to know three cards?

A: Ah, ha, there is game in which you name the cards.  
[[TAPE CUT].

[STARTS IN MIDDLE OF CONVERSATION].

DE: ... whether the 1973 Mid-East War or various things  
like that.

A: They're not only military of course, diplomats, they,  
they know a lot. There are people still alive who  
remember.

MBG: Do you think they would be willing to \_\_\_\_\_?

DE: Surprised that Borovich(?) said, I'm interested  
obviously. I gave you that proposal essay sort of thing on  
Cuba, did I not?

A: Yes, not very carefully.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 17

DE: I mentioned to Borovich today that I was working on Cuba. He said, - oh, you should talk to Achromayo(?). It hadn't occurred to me to try. Do you think he could really?

A: Oh he knows a lot. He knows a lot, yes.

DE: Achromayo.

A: Yes.

DE: He would know but I wonder if he would really see me.

A: Oh, why not? Why not? Yes, willingly, I think, yes.

DE: But all these people, I take it, are all tied up now in the current. [TAPE CUT].

[NEW LOCATION].

A: July 1941, Stalin and Molotov worked in the same room.

DE: During the war

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 18

A: During the war, yes. They had separate places where to work but actually Stalin was coming to Molotov and Molotov was coming to Stalin, that most decisions that were made during the war, were made by these two people in the same room, the same study. So Simeonov was one of the assistants to Molotov. I mean 1944, he was summoned by Stalin and Stalin showed him the place where Kornov's stuff was.

DE: Where who?

A: Where Kornov, Kornov was one of the generals. So Stalin showed him the place where Kornov's stuff was and he told him, - are you ready to go to Germany? You have a great experience of working there. He worked there in 1939, 1940 as a counselor to the ambassador.

DE: Simionov.

A: Simionov, yes. And, he had personal meetings with Hitler, with Ribbentrop. He was the only man by then who was very fluent in German and he knew the situation very well. So Stalin sent him actually to look after the situation and to advise him on decisions in Germany.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 19

DE: In what year?

A: 1944, end of 1944. So this man was there to be the political commissar, a special assistant to Molotov and Stalin while there was Kornov, while there was Shukov. And this is the man who was in power to argue with them and even to give orders to them in the name of the Politburo and in the name of Stalin. Military were very angry with him. They hated him because they were the leaders and this young man was giving the orders. So he was one of those who supported creation of a new Germany, this eastern, communist Germany because you understand that this process was not so obvious. Stalin didn't know what would happen in Germany. Simionov had established very good ties with communist, non-communist, with those people who wanted to have a separate state there in that situation. So he was there just as one of the creators of this system. Later he was one of the ambassadors. And even now, even today, he is the leading expert on Germany.

DE: I think I told you, in '83, I believe it was, I spent two and a half hours with Simeonov, in Bonn, when he was ambassador to Bonn, going over arms control proposals that I was making then.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 20

A: So he being profound part of that disarmament in arms control, he was also one of the best experts on Germany, on German question. He was Deputy Foreign Minister for many years. He was behind the decisions which were very important during Khrushchev years, foreign policy decisions. And what I want to say that his description of the situation in Eastern Europe was exactly supporting the idea that the troops we had there were the troops which were to help the regimes we established there. And the troops were to be just part or introduced anew, just dependent on the internal situation.

DE: Well, I'll tell you something that fits then exactly with what you say. There's a book that I found extremely illuminating called - "Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe" by Christopher Jones. He wrote it as a member of the Russian Research Center, now a professor at the University of Washington. He said that starting especially in '68 after Czechoslovakia that the Warsaw Pact was restructured, I think it was under Orgokov(?), I forget who.

A: No

DE: Maybe not.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 21

A: Under Kulikov(?).

DE: Kulikov, I couldn't remember.

A: To be purely an offensive alliance. They didn't want any of the Warsaw Pact countries to have their own independent capability to defend their own borders so they were to operate only in joint operations, that is, alliance operations under Soviet command and configured for offensive operations so that they would not ever exercise or prepare the ability to defend their own borders against the Soviets coming in. And that the excuse for this then, well the implication was, an offensive strategy into Western Europe served this structuring because it rationalized why they weren't practicing defense at all. They weren't explaining, we don't want you to be able to defend against us. They said, - our whole strategy is an offensive retaliation, of course, not an aggressive offense but a counter offensive. But there is a question that remains, which is, - why did they re-equip those forces so strongly? Why did they spend so much money on them, starting from '68? If the main purpose was to keep them from having a defensive capability against the Russians, why not just keep the national forces very weak and why spend so much money on the Russian forces, putting in new

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 22

tanks, modernizing them all the time. They spent an enormous amount of money on it. Do you have a sense of why that was?

A: Yes, I think that the reason behind this was the necessity to show that they really mean to defend, they really meant it, yes. Because in case they stopped ...

DE Then they couldn't explain why they were there. Is that it?

A Exactly.

DE: How does this thesis sound to you that the offensive strategy was really, to keep them from having their defensive capability?

A I would just give a thought to this.

DE: It's not familiar?

A: No, no, it's familiar but ....

DE: At any rate, it's consistent with what you say, that, mainly that the purpose of the presence of the Russian

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 23

troops was to be able to move around inside the Warsaw Pact. By the way, when I say they exercised these forces, on the exercises pretending to be invasions of West Germany, of course they weren't moving into West Germany they were moving around the Warsaw Pact.

A: Yes, I know those exercises.

DE: Ah, here we are. [TAPE CUT].

[TAPE STARTS AGAIN IN MIDDLE OF CONVERSATION].

A: ... that he was critical, yes.

DE: [INAUDIBLE QUESTION].

A: Well, [INAUDIBLE] ... I can look for it, this article, yes.

DE: Well, I wouldn't be able to read it.

A That's alright, high time.

MBG: What time is it?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 24

A: It's midnight.

MBG: I'm going to sleep before I turn into a pumpkin.  
[TAPE CUT].

A: She'll be busy with ...

DE: Tomorrow, we're going to be busy during the day,  
talking about Cuba. Actually, I'm seeing. [TAPE CUT] ...

[START NEW INTERVIEW WITH MIKOYAN].

[TAPE STARTS IN MIDDLE OF CONVERSATION]

DE: But, no, they really would never give up, you could see that. But, why not? Or, I should say, Melzivan(?) did not see that the Vietnamese would never give up. A reason that they never could understand why it was so impossible for them to give up. One problem was this, we kept saying, Rusk kept saying, Dean Rusk the Secretary of State, kept saying, - we're not asking that Hanoi change or that they surrender. They can have their country. They can live up there in North Vietnam. All we ask is that they leave their neighbors alone. Now, something I realized long ago was, in Vietnam was, no Vietnamese saw this as a matter of



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 25

neighbors. Neighbors implies two different states. All Vietnamese thought of this as one state. So I always thought of that as a fallacy on the part of the U.S. to think of this as aggression, an attack by one state on a neighboring state, that was not the way it was seen by any Vietnamese. But another side to that, and I didn't see until really rather recently and that was, the only thing was, all we are asking is that they leave their neighbors alone, which means, not aid the struggle of the Southerners for, we're talking now about exporting revolution, for revolution, independence, and unity. Three things, the unity was as important as the other. So it was said, they should not pay aid to struggle for unity. Now, what that meant was, all we are asking is that the people in the north of Vietnam should begin to think of themselves as North Vietnamese, which is a change in their identity. It's a change in their identity. Their identity was Vietnamese like other Vietnamese. And no Vietnamese thought of themselves as a South Vietnamese or a North Vietnamese. They did think of north, central Vietnamese and south. Was very important distinctions but as regional distinctions. They would say, - I am from the north. I am from the center. I am from the south. But just the way an American would now think, - I am a Northerner. I am a Southerner. I am a Westerner as an important matter but

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 26

not as a national matter, not as part of a national identity. It was the same in Vietnam. So, what we were asking was, a contraction of identity from the North Vietnamese. And what we tried to get in the south was to implant an identity which had no real local roots of a South Vietnamese, being a Southerner, being a South Vietnamese person. It was an American identity. What I'm saying is, one could conjecture that where these powers great powers go awry on it, is that they don't understand the immutability the difficult in changing a sense of value.

MIKOYAN: But if they only go \_\_\_\_\_, they could not agree in Washington for this ..

DE: Well at that time the Southerners did want to think of themselves as a different nation. There was no sense of national, they wanted to succeed.

MIKOYAN: And also in connection with your profession Margaret about national psychology, I think that the Americans, I mean in Washington, they ignored the psychology of continuous struggle against foreign domination.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 27

MBG: Absolutely, as in Latin America.

MIKOYAN: For thousand of years in China, then against Japan, then against France, then against America. This was just in their blood.

MBG: Dan, let me just say this on this contraction of identity thing. You just stimulated a thought here which might be useful, which is that, as you see, the place we're in, in world history requires, for its survival, an expansion of identity actually. I mean that's what we're talking about, the new paradigm of the self and all that stuff. So if the local conditions are such as for, instance, now here in the Soviet Union that the economic pressures, being what they are, making people miserable, then this contraction of identity follows as a kind of desperate move to say there is some place we can move to make ourselves feel more secure, more self esteem having, more, more identity real, having a more real identity. And then it takes this direction of contraction instead of expansion which actually ....

DE: If when, if when, under what conditions?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 28

MBG: Under conditions, I would say, basically, here, now, for sure, of grave economic strain. This happens as a kind of desperate, inclulate(?), not clearly perceived way out of the \_\_\_\_

DE: Yeah, but it's the invention of a new ...

MBG: Oh no, not at all, not at all.

DE: When you say contraction, it's two different senses(?) This is a retreat too, an inner core \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

MBG: Well, it's a question because, you see, the history, as I understand it, Sergo, correct me if this is not true. I have had the impression, certainly when I visited Azerbaijan in 1976 and Armenia, that Armenians and Azerbaijan were living more or less side by side, more or less peacefully without having to insist, I am an Azerbaijani. I am an Armenian, meaning that it was there. It was under the surface but it wasn't like something that you had to pull out of yourself as ...



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 29

MIKOYAN: Well daily it was more or less peacefully but outside Karabak(?) very peacefully. Azerbaijanis came with their food to markets of Armenian.

MBG: You say, outside Karabak, what was inside Karabak?

MIKOYAN: But inside Karabak for last 60 years, they had unrest.

MBG: Steadily?

MIKOYAN: Steadily, because Azerbaijanis were doing the same which they did what had did in Makachurad(?). In Makachurad(?) in the beginning there was 53 percent of Armenians. But two years ago, they had 1 percent of Armenians. They all left. They pushed them out, not physically but not giving good opportunity, appointments and so on. They made them go. So after that, they decided to do this with Karabek. But the population in that region is very stubborn, very inclined to fight.

DE: And they will not give up their \_\_\_\_\_. We are Armenians.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 30

MIKOYAN: They will die there. They cannot understand it, in Moscow, here. They thought in the beginning, we shall not intervene and they officially declared to Armenians there that in case of armed conflicts between you and Azerbaijanis, we shall not intervene. The top officials told this.

DE: Why did they say that, to encourage the Armenians to compromise?

MIKOYAN: To go out, to leave. But instead they only organized the defense, they began to collect arms because they said, if they do not defend us, we will defend ourselves.

MBG: Dan, you should tell, wasn't it Henry Kissinger, about every country has its breaking point, remember?

MIKOYAN: I don't know this expression but this is this point where they . .

MBG: Where they don't understand.

DE: He said that about Vietnam. In '69 they were planning a massive attack on North Vietnam, possibly including

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 31

nuclear weapons with the threat of nuclear weapons, with plans prepared for that, which was mainly a threat to our bluff but it was not \_\_\_\_\_ it would really be used.

MIKOYAN: It's after bombing of Hanoi?

DE: No, in '69, the first year of Nixon, Nixon's first year. So at Kissinger's insistence, they were told to plan for a savage blow which would teach a fourth rate industrial power that it could not challenge the world's mightiest industrial power. And so the assistant said, - but we've been bombing North Vietnam for three years and it had no effect. So, why, now, at this point, they were not bombing? The bombing had ceased in '68. He said, - why go to renewal of the bombing have any different effect? So Kissinger said, - you are trying to tell me that this is the only country in the world that has no breaking point. He says, - I do not believe that. And your problem is to find what would be their breaking point. But they never did ...

MIKOYAN: He is mistaken but there are some occasions when people will just fight to the last. They will not break.

DE: His own country, Germany, had no breaking point.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 32

MIKOYAN: Had no breaking point. They fought last soldier in the ....

DE: Even the Japanese had really no really breaking point. The emperor himself made the decision finally. But the people had no breaking point. The people were going to fight on. Really, nobody had ever collapsed under bombing. The closest to it was Italy but that was a \_\_\_\_.

MIKOYAN: And even without the bombing, I think even if our country was, Moscow was \_\_\_\_\_ for instance, people would continue in Siberia. They wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_

DE: It's a stupid notion that simply coercion is enough, if you have enough power, that might makes right. It's the notion that people had here about Afghanistan or many other countries. We have are so much bigger, how can they \_\_\_\_\_. It's impossible. The mistake again they make is, the small power can't militarily defeat the large power but it can stalemate the large power. That is what is not understood, that you can be fought to a standstill, where you make no progress, if you're willing to die.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 33

MIKOYAN: Of course you can destroy all of them but you cannot make them act obedient.

DE: The notion that there's a country that can't be coerced, they can't understand, they can't imagine. Well that could be happening right now. As \_\_\_\_\_ said last night, he said, - well, they'll just have to give in. The Armenians will have to give in.

MBG: Have to give in. They won't have to, no.

MIKOYAN: This man, must be the man who lives here?

MBG: Yeah, he lives here in Moscow

DE: He takes Georgian nationally, very seriously. Nobody sense this. How could the Vietnamese go into Cambodia and think they would have a very quick time, very easy time, ten years later they have to come out. Israel goes into Lebanon, has to come out. Tanzania went into Uganda, to go far afield here, Iraq went into Iran. Each of these people thought it would be a quick victory. And each of these was after Vietnam and they were all in succession. Not one learned from the other. I think I'm beginning to



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 34

get a general rule. It just seems to be impossible for one country to learn from the experience of a \_\_\_\_\_

MIKOYAN: If you say, they are weak, they are ... it's all experience because each time new mistake is made because they think there are some new conditions.

DE: It's always a new team. When I saw Kissinger in '70, I could see he was reproducing Walt Rostow's strategy. Walt Rostow has been his previous Harvard, MIT, Cambridge ...

MBG: Don't pile all on my Harvard.

DE And I said, and before him the Dean of Harvard McGeorge Bundy, I said, - your policy looks much the same to me. And he says, as Walt Rostow is the ultimate insult and he said, - Walt Rostow is a fool. And I said, - well that may be true but McGeorge Bundy is no fool, was no fool, but a very foolish \_\_\_\_\_. McGeorge Bundy's policy is an example I had in mind. He's a brilliant man but if you read some of his cables in '65 you think your reading the cables of an idiot, of a moron, really, they're insane. He was telling the President what he wanted to hear. He was being dumb enough to keep his job. He was saying, - we



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 35

should start the bombing of North Vietnam to stabilize the government in Saigon to give them confidence. That was the reason we should kill these people to give confidence to these generals in Saigon. The generals had just been subject to a coup in Saigon. And there was another coup, weeks after the bombing started, which was not a surprise. It was just simply an idiotic reason to give. And, it was like saying, as if the Soviets said, we must go into Afghanistan to increase our credibility with Amin. Well they killed, they were there. So, it's the same kind of reasoning. So, here's the Dean of Harvard doing that. So, he said, - well McGeorge Bundy has no sense of policy. Could we talk about Cuba? Do you mind talking?

MIKOYAN: I want to order that my wife invited you to the lunch.

MBG: Oh, I didn't know that. [TAPE CUT].

[END OF SIDE A]

DE: Here is something of a contradiction that I see in the accounts. Maybe you can explain it. On the one hand, Khrushchev saw, correctly saw the U.S. as very aggressive with respect to Cuba, ready to attack and he put the

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 36

missiles there in large part. Or, in your opinion, isn't it primarily, don't you believe primarily in order to deter the attack on Cuba? There's some difference among the Soviets on this. As I recall, you were one who felt that that was ...

MIKOYAN: [UNINTELLIGIBLE COMMENT].

DE: Mainly for the global reason. Is your feeling that there both reasons or that it was overwhelmingly the Cuban reason.

MIKOYAN: I think the last one.

DE: Overwhelmingly Cuban.

MIKOYAN: On the part of Khrushchev.

DE: Would you expect any emphasis at all on the global or not?

MIKOYAN: No, no, no, I do not exclude absolutely. My opinion is that for Milanovsky, for instance, maybe this was even more important but it was not him who took the decision. Khrushchev took the decision.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 37

DE: Do you happen to have in your mind, you might well not, do you recall at all the Gilpatrick~~X~~ speech of October 1961 which said that the U.S. ability to strike second is greater than the Soviet ability to strike first. In other words, even after we had experienced the first strike, we would still have much more than the Soviets had in the first place. You don't recall any such thing?

MIKOYAN: I don't remember it but. Now I think it would be based upon this right of one of 17(?) endings.

DE: Now here's the question. Khrushchev saw, correctly that the U.S. was very aggressive with respect to Cuba and was prepared to attack. And yet, expected Kennedy apparently to accept the presence of the missiles there without attacking. Is there some contradiction to that or not?

MIKOYAN: As a fait accompli, (?) but he wanted to inform him after [UNINTELLIGIBLE FEW WORDS] .... installed and ready.

DE: Now I have several questions with respect to that. On the U.S. side there was a tendency to think that the

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 38

missiles, the presence of the missiles added a reason to attack, very strongly. In fact that they gave an excuse and a justification and a reason to attack, much stronger than before. Was that possibility not seen as a possibility by Khrushchev?

MIKOYAN And that's why my father was against it.

DE: He thought, - that's the way they will react?

MIKOYAN: Yes. This is exactly what my father told him, to Khrushchev.

DE: That they won't accept it?

MIKOYAN: Yes, it is too dangerous.

DE: How does one explain in Khrushchev's mind, in one person's mind, not as an argument, how do you explain that one person could think, - here is Kennedy ready to be the aggressor without any missiles there but he will be very peaceful once the missiles get there rather than aggressive?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 39

MIKOYAN: Because of understanding that this could lead to a missile war, not only the local war.

DE: And he certainly would not want to take a risk of that.

MIKOYAN: Yes, too risky. Besides he thought that this was not Kennedy himself but Pentagon and CIA and so on.

DE: Which, on being aggressive?

MIKOYAN: Yes, aggressiveness because the Bay of Pigs was the result of the \_\_\_\_\_, which had been developed before Kennedy.

DE: He thought that Kennedy was not personally pushing the efforts against Cuba. What do you think on that?

MIKOYAN: Well, I understand that he submitted in April 1961, he only permitted to fulfill the earlier plan.

DE: Later, how about after the failure of the Bay of Pigs?

MIKOYAN: In 1962.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 40

DE: Between the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crises, how do you think Kennedy's personal role was? What do you know think?

MIKOYAN: Well, I guess that he was aggressive because he talked with Cubans many times.

DE: He, who did?

MIKOYAN: Kennedy. I mean with emigres and he even include them into American Army, didn't he?

DE: Yes he did. That was after they came back. That was after the missile crises.

MIKOYAN: Of course to get rid of Castro for any American Administration would have been a big success.

DE: This does bear on how Khrushchev saw the lesson of the Bay of Pigs. You're saying in effect that he thought that Kennedy had been forced into the Bay of Pigs but had pulled back from a combat involvement. You didn't say that but I'm adding that. He had been prudent, let's say.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 41

MIKOYAN: Well, if we had gone back to April '61, he had two alternatives: either not to enter in or to use the Bay of Pigs as a pretext for a full-scale attack. He didn't do it.

DE: He didn't. Now, what evidence do you have, have you heard your father speaking or some other basis, for guessing what Khrushchev's assessment was of Kennedy's performance after that? Did he feel that Kennedy had been prudent, statesmanlike, wise, strong in not intervening? Did he feel that he had been weak or cowardly? Did he feel that he had been indecisive? Did he feel that, what? Or was he not sure?

MIKOYAN: ... things, because, of course, he understood that Kennedy was very intelligent and of course not a coward. But he was not a maniac, you see. And he thought maybe, I think so, it's only my opinion, that after the Bay of Pigs, because he did not intervene, we could expect him not to be too aggressive when he was informed of our missiles being installed.

DE: That's all reasonable. By the way, what I'm asking on this point is, was that associated with a kind of respectful, admiring attitude or a contemptuous attitude?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 42

MIKOYAN: That he was a man with whom you could be reasonable and you talk with him reasonable and say, - you have your missiles in Turkey, in Norway, so we are surrounded by your missiles. So what's the difference? And why you must feel such danger because they're our missiles We can make peace but on equal basis.

DE: Do you think that he did feel some tinge of contempt for Kennedy, for drawing back from the Bay of Pigs?

MIKOYAN: Of contempt of ...

DE: Of contempt, of disrespect, a feeling that he was weak for condescending?

MIKOYAN: No, no, no, I don't think so.

DE: Or indecisive?

MIKOYAN: And also Sergei Khrushchev also does not think so. His impressions of what his father ...

DE: I think both of you made a very interesting point in the transcript that to the extent that they did think of

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 43

Kennedy as weak, it was not that he was not violent enough but that he tended to yield bureaucratically to the \_\_\_\_.

MIKOYAN: This was my opinion.

DE: Your own personal opinion of Khrushchev's opinion or of your own opinion.

MIKOYAN: My opinion about Khrushchev.

DE: Is there any direct evidence? Did you hear a specific statement to that affect by anybody?

MIKOYAN: No, but you can talk with his son but I think that he told everything.

MBG: He's out of town.

DE: Yeah, he's out of town.

DE: See. that's very interesting because your impression of Kennedy's weakness, I would agree with from being in, listen I'll tell you something. I have heard, I heard his wife say that he was, she used the word weak. Here's the sentence, - my husband was a weak man. She said to me and



she said that in the context that he was not willing to overrule the Pentagon on Vietnam, on Vietnam. When he felt that they were wrong. And I said, I'll tell you the context, it was just like Cuba but it was Vietnam, - he understood from French writings that she had translated for him, that Vietnamese would never give up, were very strong nationalistically. So when she said that to me, I said, - if he knew that, how could he, I just said, - how could he? And she said, - he was a weak man. But it's the same impression you've just given of Khrushchev. But I was thinking, all of that is consistent except there is this small, not so small, inconsistency, except that he also him as very aggressive toward Cuba itself. But you don't see that as a contradiction? In other words, he sees Kennedy as very reasonable. He will not want to go to war. He'll accept this. But the counter - look at the way he acted in the Bay of Pigs, but the counter action is two-fold: look at how aggressive he is being in Cuba, right now, Mongoose Operation, and one other possibility which I think, by the way, was personal on Kennedy's part, which I think you also correctly inferred, rather Khrushchev did. I think you say, - Khrushchev said, - he has been humiliated at the Bay of Pigs and he will want revenge. Weren't you the one who said that in the conference?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 45

MIKOYAN: Yes, I think, yes.

DE: So I thought that was very shrewed psychologically and correct, that he did want revenge. So one could say, will he, in other words, will not that lead him to be also aggressive if he sees the missiles, that's one possibility. The second is, if he is weak with respect to the Pentagon and CIA then even though he is reasonable, will he stand up to his own Pentagon and his own CIA if they want to be aggressive when the missiles appear? Couldn't that have been a factor that would worry Khrushchev? But apparently it didn't. Do you follow me?

MIKOYAN: Yes. I think there are two very different things, to affect an island which has, of course potential defensive, but not more than maybe one week. And it's absolutely another thing to affect the island with prepared missiles and [MUCH STATIC AND INTERFERENCE ON TAPE, DIFFICULT TO HEAR] one full army of ...

DE: Wait, a full army of what?

MIKOYAN: Of our troops, 42 thousand.

1990

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 46

DE: But you hadn't told us that you had the troops there.  
We didn't know that. [LAUGH]

---

[NEW INTERVIEW].

DE: [THIS IS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH, CHUMBER ASSATIANI(?) IS EXPLAINING TO US THE RALLY WE'RE GOING TO IN GORKY PARK ON THE DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS - THE DEMOCRATIC COALITION MEETINGS].

DE: The Democratic Coalition is meeting.

A: All the democratic parties and forces that emerged among them there is a inter regional group where Sakharov, Yeltsin and Poppoff, are the members, was the member.

DE: Who is the third person?

A: Poppoff. This is an economist, the is the editor of the scientific magazine on economics.

MBG: The guy that John Mack said we should meet with

A: He is an outstanding economist.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 47

MBG: Do you have a phone number for him?

A: I could find it, yeah. He's very busy these days

DE: We only have a couple \_\_\_\_\_.

A: His positions are very well known.

MBG: Before you came down, Chumber was say saying a very  
interesting thing. He said, this democratic platform  
within the Communist Party wants like today to have them  
discuss this matter and demand that this happen instantly  
that Article 6 be rescinded so they can not only vote on it  
at this plenary session but decide that Article 6 is over  
with, which I found extraordinarily interesting.

DE: Would you favor that?

A: Of course, absolutely.

DE: No, I'm not sure, we're not aware of having met any  
Soviet who disagrees with that. There may be some that  
haven't mentioned, but we haven't actually met anyone.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 48

A: Only conservatives of old guard can be against it because they are afraid that they'll be deprived of their privileges.

DE: Which they will.

A: Yes, of course.

DE: Are they afraid of being tried as in some of these other countries?

A: Some would, deep in their heart, of course they're afraid of extreme things. Of course they understand that if it starts with small things then it can grow into very ...

DE: First you lose the limousine, in the end you're in a very small cell.

MBG: Was that thing the end of the list of demands?

A: No, no, no, I said, after this first \_\_\_\_\_, the second one which is as important as the first, multi-party system. They want CPSU to initiate, these people are communists



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 49

not all of them at the meeting but a new part is made of communists.

DE: New part?

A: Yes, this is Democratic Platform.

MBG: Within the Party?

A: Yes, so these are not regular members of the Party, not just regular Communists.

DE: What are they?

A: Among them there are Party Secretaries.

MBG. Really?

A: Yes, there are also people who are in Party schools. One of the members one of the leaders of this group, he is the head of the Party school in Moscow.

DE: Really, what's his name?

A: Not that I remember.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 50

DE: Has there been a rally like this before?

A: Yes, last Sunday, there was a rally organized by, more or less, the same people, but it was not very big. And Yeltsin group held rallies before, almost every month, just during the sessions of the Supreme Soviet and before [INTERRUPTION] so because of this demonstration, they do not let us go there in a car. But somehow we can approach.

DE: Are we near Gorky Park?

A: Finally, we'll be there.

DE: He's detouring us?

A: Yes, because of demonstration. Last week, last Sunday, there were one thousand five hundred people. But today my estimation is that there will be not less than 20 thousand.

MBG: You're kidding?

A: Oh, yeah, I think so.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 51

DE: Well this be the biggest they've ever had?

A: Of this kind.

MBG: This has all got together the last five weeks then.

DE: Oh, five weeks, but in other kinds, what do you compare it to?

A: Big ones were when there was controversy between Yeltsin and Ligachov and when this group of inter-regional group was formed.

DE: And that's the 400 deputies roughly.

A: You mean number of members? Yes, yes, yes. They were convening meetings ...

DE: What is this group, Democratic Union, I think it's called, the one that the police keep beating up dispersing?

MBG: Oh, hey, that's a lot of people. [TAPE CUT].

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 52

DE: I wonder if we should go and take a look, can we do that? [TAPE CUT].

DE: Flags, men in uniforms holding hands, fur hats, women, many flags, banners, an enormous crowd, we're told 20 thousand people marching down over the Crimean Bridge toward the Kremlin - Democracy Now. [PEOPLE SHOUTING IN BACKGROUND].

DE: Everyone says, there's no problem of an army takeover. The army has no tradition here of running a state. They are subservient to authority. I am skeptical that people should be so confident in the end, of that. After all there's always a first time. And in Chile, when the army took over, with the encouragement of the U.S. that was after over a hundred years of civilian rule. So how can people be so confident that if there was disorder here, the army wouldn't say, - we can take care of it?

A: We are so confident because we are experiencing the fact, the process of diminishing of the role of the army. So if it were on the contrary, then we would be suspicious.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 53

DE: But then the army is experiencing that to, which could make them desperate. The only way to keep their role important would be for them to take power as in Poland.

A: Yes, but the fact is that this army is subject to the process, more or less the same process, that it was in 1917. The army is made of millions of soldiers and officers who are the pride of \_\_\_\_\_. Army is very undemocratic. It cannot be democratic but it's as undemocratic as .... [TAPE CUT].

DE: You were saying, the army.

A: Is undergoing the process. [TAPE CUT]. We knew in 1917, inside the army there is very strong support for Gorbachev and Gorbachev's \_\_\_\_\_. So the commanders, the generals will decide one day to use the army against Gorbachev.

DE: It goes on forever. It was not stopping. It was just a curve in the road. It still goes on. Look, it's still as far as we can see, still.

MBG: Oh, my God.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 54

DE: Okay, go ahead. Look I can say, we saw it stopped under that bridge, the Crimea Bridge. Now that as 12:30 and it started about 12:30 so for 35 minutes, they are still coming past that bridge. What about special units airborne units, some elite units?

A: What can they do? They can do to the places like \_\_\_\_\_, or Minsk or small places where they can fight and kill civilians but they cannot change the political situation in the country. They cannot fight 100 thousand people with democratic ...

DE: Well, then you come back to the situation, as in China, where they had 100 thousand people and where they really did hope that the army would support the people or split or the parts of the army that the supported the people would deter the others, but in the end, they obeyed, right. Even though experts, such as they are, were saying there was really a good chance that the army would refuse to obey these orders The fact is that they did obey, in China.

A: Yeah, it's a very bad example. Of course we have in mind this example.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 55

DE: Let me put it another way. How can that example be dismissed? How is it that that example, it's not just that people say it's less likely or not certain, most people, like yourself, said, - no chance, that's what I don't understand. If it happened in China, why couldn't it happen here?

A: When I say, no chance, I'm saying ...

MBG You mean, almost no chance.

A: Yes, of course, anything can happen.

DE: Why isn't China a very strong candidate for what might happen, like 50 percent?

A: I'm not a specialist. I don't know what was going on in China. [TAPE CUT]. ... will not repeat in Russia.

DE: I just want to believe it will not happen. Well this may be the day. This is like the beginning in Tieneneman Square, they won't do it today. Famous last words. What do you think the plenary is thinking about this?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 56

A: They'll be under very strong impact. They'll be under very strong influence of this.

DE: You think it's very well timed, really?

A: Absolutely.

DE: By the way, how did they time it so well because the plenary was moved, wasn't it?

A: Of course they moved.

DE: Wasn't the plenary scheduled for last week?

A: Yes, it was scheduled for the last week.

DE: But the rally was scheduled for today anyway?

A: There was a rally last week.

MBG: You said there was one last Sunday too. 1500 only

DE: Well, that's like Prague, by the way. They moved from about 1500 the first one to suddenly went to.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 57

MBG: Hey Look Dan, look down there, look down there.  
Whoa! Whoa!

DE: Is there Hari Khrishna over there.

A: Yeah, yeah, part of the democratic movement. [LAUGH]  
[TAPE CUT].

A: Of course we saw this May Day demonstration, which are enormous normally but they \_\_\_\_\_. They ordered and they go.

DE: Are any of these people in organizations?

A: Yes, these are democratic organizations.

DE: There are so many who are organized already?

A: Yes. There are some people who are against Gorbachev

DE: And this is the Crimean Bridge?

A: Yes, this is the Crimean Bridge. I want you to meet my friend, Basha. His name is Basha. [TAPE CUT].

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 58

DE: How did Gorbachev get selected? Who is in the Central Committee?

A: Yes, Deputies of the Prime Minister, military commanders, not many. The biggest segment of the members of the Central Committee are the local leaders of the Republics and Districts. So all these people, I want to say, early or later were just chosen by the Politburo members themselves to be the members of the Central Committee. You understand, who chooses - not members of the Central Committee choose the members of the Politburo. But the members of the Politburo choose the ...

DE: They choose them from the ranks of these positions or do they put them in those position?

A They put them into these positions, yes. They select them through a very sophisticated system of selection of the party leaders and administrative leaders. First they select them and then they choose them and then they install them as Party leaders in republics, Party leaders in districts. And then they just let them know what they want. They let them know that they want, for instance, this or that person to be a Secretary of the Party or a Minister.

DE: They, the Politburo.

A: Yes, they the Politburo, but Politburo itself never works as one team. Politburo itself consists of important members of Politburo, very important and less important. So, who are the most important people normally? These are the people holding the position as a General Secretary, Prime Minister, President, Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, KGB Chief. These are the most important people. I name them all. So, from time to time, it depends on a personality, the importance of President, for instance, as Gromyko, he was the President, becomes very, very big. So in the situation when Gorbachev was brought to power, the importance of Gromyko was very strong. He was one of the strongest members of the Politburo. So, Andropov was no more there. Andropov was his enemy and another strongman Wistino(?) was no more there, he died. Chernenko was no more. So the strong men. [INTERRUPTION]. The strong man in the Politburo was Gromyko. Who were the people who were supporting him? There was a great number ...

DE: This was after Chernenko died, the day after he died?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 60

A: Yes, yes, yeah. So Chernenko was dying for nearly one year. So Gromyko had enough time to prepare. So who were the members of the Central Committee who were backing Gromyko for sure? These were his deputies in Supreme Soviet, his former deputies in the Foreign Ministry and his ambassadors. Most ambassadors in the socialist countries and some ambassadors in leading countries are members of the Central Committee. So, there is a number of members of Central Committee from diplomatic service. From time to time, it's 100 less a little bit or a little bit more. So he had this stronghold. His former colleagues, his former deputies and his colleagues in Supreme Soviet. He was the President of the country by the time. So, being the President of the country or the President of the Supreme Soviet, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, he also had support from local leaders who were subordinate. They were his subordinates. You that 15 presidents of the Republics are his deputies, nominally. Just being president of a Republic means being a Deputy to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. So, he was very strong and he was also very experienced. And he used all his strength and experience to just nominate and to install Gorbachev.

DE: Where is this? What is this?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 61

A: Gorky Park. This is Crimean Bridge. When Gromyko decided that Gorbachev was the right man, he had support of members of the Politburo such as ...

DE: Excuse me, what river is this?

A: Moscva (sic). There is one big river in Moscow. This town has it's name after the river. Moscva River, the town of Moscow. Mr. Gromyko made this choice because he thought that Gorbachev was right man to make changes. Gromyko was for making changes in this country. And he was opposed by conservatives in the Party. There were a lot of conservatives in the Party and in the leadership. But either they were old or they did not have such strong support from other members of the Central Committee. So he managed to install Gorbachev, I mean Gromyko by conspiring with Ligachev, who was a man from local leadership.

MBG: Who conspired with Ligachev?

A: Gromyko also, yes, with Ligachev is Shevrenadzen to Moscow, Gromyko, and installed him as a foreign minister. And he had his loyalty, \_\_\_\_\_ loyalty.

MBG: Where did he bring him from?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 62

A: From Georgia.

MBG: Yes, Shevrenadzen was a party leader in Georgia.

DE: I thought Gorbachev brought him.

A: No, no, Gromyko did it.

DE Before Gorbachev or after Gorbachev came in?

A: After Gorbachev came in but it was Gromyko who decided.

MBG. Who should know? That's very interesting.

DE: Ligachev agreed with Gorbachev coming in?

A: Of course, yes, yes. He was just one of the members

DE: Who were the main rivals? Who were the main other candidates the conservatives preferred? Who else was a rival to Gorbachev?

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 63

A: It was prepared very neatly, now this change, I mean nomination of Gorbachev. Actually, there no candidates, serious candidates.

MBG You mean there were no rivals?

A: No rivals, for the moment, but before there were people who would aspire, but they were removed much earlier So you know these names, there was Amanov, there was Grechen(?) They were removed one year or two years before.

MBG: But one has to grant that he is a remarkable and very unusual man, personally, don't we?

A: Yes, he is, compared to other leaders.

MBG: Compared to any leader in the world.

DE: Would Gromyko have backed him if he thought that he was not just a reformer of the Party but that he might lead to a multi-party system?

A Of course he would.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 64

DE: He would?

A: Yes. Gromyko was absolutely sure that multi-party system was necessary.

MBG: No kidding?

A: Absolutely

MBG: No kidding? Wow!

A We discussed these problems, how say?

MGB: Frankly?

A: Yeah, it was 1970's, we discussed this.

MBG: Really.

A: '75, '76.

DE: Your personally or in a group?

A: In a group, yes. Normally, we worked in a group of five people, six people.



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 65

DE: That was not a dangerous sentiment at that time?

A No, no, because it was a previous question and we were discussing the problems that the leadership of this country faces.

DE: What other members of the Politburo would have agreed?

A Actually I have never heard any other members of Politburo discussing ...

DE: So, are you saying that Gromyko is the author of this trend?

A: No, I would not say he was the author. But he was one of the people who would favor this.

DE: Who else would there have been?

A: There would have been Yakovlev, by then he was not member of the Politburo but he was someone from foreign service also. He was an ambassador to Canada for many years.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB 1990  
PAGE 66

DE: Who else? That's interesting. Who else?

MBG Droby<sup>y</sup>nin.

A: And of course Drobynin, yes.

DE: But not Gorbachev, it seems.

A: No, I think no because his experience was different.  
Gorbachev was a professional Party leader.

DE: So, of Gromyko believed in multi-party system, could  
he have gotten somebody better than Gorbachev to do that or  
committed to that approach? Why pick Gorbachev then?

A No, not for the moment Actually, the Politburo  
consists, I told you, of officials who, consisted of  
officials who held certain positions. So, for instance  
Defense Minister ...

DE What is that building there?

A: This is the Government of Russia, Supreme Soviet of  
Russia and Council of Ministers.

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 67

MBG: It's inside that building where, we see on television, when they meet?

A: This is Russia, not Soviet Union.

MBG: The low one also or just the high one?

A: The whole thing.

DE: Well, you say, there's no vote but doesn't the Central Committee vote then on who shall be ...

A: Yes, then they voted and they voted unanimously. It was decided just between two or three people and then this was, he himself nominated him, just in person.

DE: Now, who picks the Politburo?

MBG: How do they get selected?

DE: Is it cells, is it a self nominating body?

A: More or less, yes, more or less. You know how it happens, once you have a Politburo already, any changes in the Politburo are decided by the General Secretary. He has

ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 68

enormous power. So he decided who are on the Board, who are members. So, as in Khrushchev's case, when he has no more support of the other members of Politburo, then, of course he cannot decide anything. He's isolated as it was in case of Khrushchev, he was isolated. He was in Georgia, on the Black Sea, having his holiday, vacation, with Mikoyan. Did you know that he was there with Mikoyan? He was there with Mikoyan. And Mikoyan knew about the coming changes and he knew that there the group was conspiring against Khrushchev.

DE: He didn't tell him?

A: Yes, he didn't tell him. Actually he was with him to calm him down and to neutralize him.

DE: You were saying the other day, what was the main reason why Khrushchev was ousted, the economic situation was that?

A: Yes.

DE: What was bad about it, the food?



ASSATIANI/MIKOYAN  
FEB. 1990  
PAGE 69

A: There was no more bread in stores. There were queues for mediocre standard bread, not normal bread but just made to ....

DE: You were saying that things up till now are more or less inevitable, if I understood you, the requirements of the situation were such that it was inevitable that they would go the way they have, true?

A: Yeah, yes, in a way, but my understanding of what is going on now and what was going on in the country is not from the point of view of inevitability but from the point of view of just needs, you know, elementary yes, requirements, yes.

DE: What is it that the situation requires for the next few years then?

A: For the next few years. [TAPE CUT].

[END OF SIDE B].